DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 412 492 CG 028 156

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TITLE Lost Childhoods: The Plight of the Parentified Child.
ISBN ISBN-0-87630-825-6
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 252p.
AVAILABLE FROM Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 19 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003 ($34.95).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Caregiver Role; Child Abuse; *Child Development; *Child Role; Children; Counselor Role; Elementary Secondary Education; *Family Problems; Family Role

ABSTRACT

Growing numbers of children are being parentified; that is, they are sacrificing their childhoods and assuming a parental role to take care of family members and the family as a whole. Many of the issues and risks surrounding this process are explored in this book. The parentified phenomenon is frequently overlooked by therapists, although it is found in troubled families of all kinds. The text explores complicated individual, family, sociocultural, and existential-ethical forces at work in the lives of parentified children. It claims that pathological parentification is a discriminable category of maltreatment and may have specific etiologies. Specific guidelines and models for evaluating, treating, and preventing destructive parentification of children and adolescents are offered. The book is divided into two parts. In part 1, separate chapters define and conceptualize destructive parentification from an ecological-ethical perspective. Applications for this material are then discussed in part 2. Clinical manifestations of destructive parentification and their identification; treatment within family, couple, and community contexts; and prevention are all addressed. In the last chapter, the special professional, ethical, and personal challenges facing therapists with a history of pathological parentification are discussed. Contains both a name and a subject index and approximately 310 references. (RJM)

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